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THE WORLD'S BEST NEWS & FACTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

NEWS
New library honors 26th US President
p4

HOW TO
Ride the waves on a bodyboard
p24

ANIMALS
Research on dolphin friendships
p10

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Making sense of the world

THE WEEK Junior

THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

PLAY BALL!

The Women's Pro Baseball League gets set for its first season p12

Speeding up building could help more people buy homes.

FACT FILE
As of March 2026, 65% of Americans owned the home they live in, according to the US Census Bureau.

What is HUD?

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which will help enact the new law, was created in 1965 and has provided affordable mortgages to millions of Americans. HUD also oversees public housing and enforces fair housing and anti-discrimination laws for homeowners and renters.

Major housing bill becomes law

The largest housing bill passed by Congress (the branch of government that makes laws) in 30 years became law on July 11. The legislation is designed to address a housing shortage in the US by increasing the supply of homes and lowering costs for home buyers.

What happened?

The Senate (one half of Congress) passed the bill, called the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act, on June 22 by a vote of 85–5, and the House of Representatives (the other half of Congress) passed it on June 23 with a 358–32 vote. On June 24, it went to President Donald Trump for his signature. At first Trump planned to sign the bill, but he changed his mind, saying he was protesting against Congress for not passing an unrelated bill involving voting rights. The US Constitution (nation's highest law) states that if a President does not veto a bill within 10 days of receiving it (excluding Sundays), it becomes a law. As a result, the housing act automatically became law at 12:01 a.m. on July 11.

The US Capitol Building, where Congress meets

What is in the law?

The law includes more than 40 points, added by members of both major political parties (Democrats and Republicans), that aim to encourage and speed up home building across the nation. The law reduces or removes regulations, including environmental reviews and design approvals, that slow down construction. It also makes it easier to build manufactured homes, which are significantly less expensive than typical construction, and sends more funds to communities that are building more homes. The law prevents real estate companies from owning more than 350 homes, which is intended to make more properties available to individual buyers. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will be responsible for implementing many of the law's provisions.

Why is this significant?

Experts estimate that the US faces a shortage of between 1 million and 6 million housing units. When fewer houses or apartments are available, demand for them goes up, which in turn makes them more expensive. On July 9, the National Association of Realtors reported that home prices rose to the highest level on record in June. The median price of a home sold that month was $440,600, an increase of 1.8% over the year before. By one estimate, households earning $100,000 a year can afford 39% of houses on the market, when typically they could afford 56% of them. This is creating a serious challenge for many families who are facing higher costs on groceries, gas, and other basics as well. The law was also unusual because both Republicans and Democrats supported it in a rare show of bipartisan (two-party) cooperation.

How did people react?

Many members of Congress celebrated the law. "When you put more housing supply on the market, more people have a chance to become first-time home buyers," Senator Tim Scott, a Republican from South Carolina who co-sponsored the bill, told ABC News. "We set out to increase our nation's housing supply [and] expand homeownership," Representative Maxine Waters of California, another co-sponsor, told *The New York Times*. "And even though it was difficult to agree on everything, we got it done." Housing advocates said the bill does not do enough to help lower-income families, however, and called for more changes to local regulations, which are set by state and city governments. The law also does not address factors such as mortgage interest rates, which are the costs people incur when they borrow money from a bank or other lender to buy a home.

What will happen next?

The law went into effect immediately, but it will take time for the changes to filter through the housing industry and for affordable options to be built. Most homes take years to plan and build.

Ebola vaccine to be tested

On July 13, scientists in the UK announced that a new vaccine to tackle the Ebola virus is ready to be tested on people. The news comes amid an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda that began in May. More than 1,900 cases of the virus have been confirmed, and more than 700 people have died.

The outbreak is caused by the Bundibugyo strain of the virus, which has no approved treatments or vaccines. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency on May 17, and scientists at the University of Oxford quickly began working to develop a vaccine. The process typically takes years, but they developed this one in eight weeks by adapting existing Covid vaccine technology.

Scientists have tested the new vaccine on mice and monkeys and will soon give it to 50 healthy adult volunteers. Although it will not be available in time to contain the current outbreak, it could help prevent future ones. Three other Ebola vaccines are also currently being developed.

A scientist working on the new vaccine

ART HISTORY
Works of art like the Bayeux Tapestry were a way to tell stories to the many people who did not know how to read in the Middle Ages.

A detail of the Bayeux Tapestry, which consists of nine panels stitched together

Medieval tapestry arrives in UK

A precious medieval artifact was moved on July 9 from France to England, where it will be displayed in honor of the long history between the nations. The Bayeux Tapestry, which was hand-embroidered with wool thread on linen in the 1000s, recounts pivotal historical events.

The 229-foot-long tapestry tells the story of a leader from France named William, Duke of Normandy, conquering England in 1066. It includes 58 scenes with 626 characters and 202 horses and is considered an accurate account of events and life in the 11th century. Its creators, who are unknown, captured details about architecture, Viking-style ships, and battlefield armor.

For 700 years, the tapestry was kept in a wooden chest and hung up once a year in a church in Bayeux, France. It was displayed publicly in 1812 and seized by Nazis (German political party led by Adolf Hitler) during World War II (1939–1945). In 1944, it went to the Louvre Museum. It has been displayed at the Bayeux Museum since 1983.

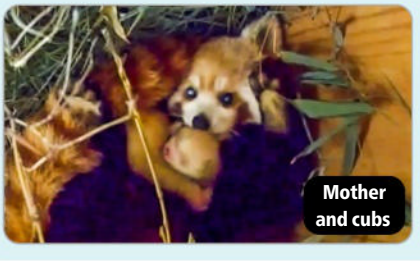
The move to England required secrecy and great care due to the tapestry's delicate condition and historical significance. It was put in a climate-controlled crate surrounded by an aluminum frame and shock-absorbing springs, then transported overnight by truck and train to England, where police accompanied it to the British Museum.

The artwork, which is on loan from France to England, is part of the celebration of the 1,000th anniversary of the birth of William (known as William the Conqueror). Millions of people are expected to view the tapestry, which will be on display from September 2026 until July 2027.

IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

RARE TWINS

It's double the joy for the Santa Barbara Zoo in California, where twin red panda cubs were recently born. The species is endangered in the wild, and none have been born at the zoo since 1993. "Good things come in pairs," the zoo said.



Mother and cubs

A HUGE TROPHY

As the FIFA World Cup nears its final match (see p18), a 27-foot-tall tournament trophy built from more than 1.36 million Lego bricks has been installed in New York City. The structure, which required 59 people, 7,040 hours, and a crane that hoisted sections of it into place, celebrates "the power of football and play to unite people," Lego said.

The Lego trophy

A SPECIAL GUEST

When 8-year-old Andres Robles stepped through the gates of Disneyland in California, he had no idea he was about to be named the park's 1 billionth visitor. Robles and his family, who were visiting from Arizona to celebrate his birthday, enjoyed a VIP tour and "became part of Disneyland history," the park said.

The big moment

ON THE COVER: WOMEN'S PRO BASEBALL LEAGUE (2); GETTY IMAGES (7); ON THIS PAGE: BAYEUX MUSEUM; TREVOR LLOYD/BBC; SANTA BARBARA ZOO; GETTY IMAGES; CHRISTIAN THOMPSON/DISNEYLAND RESORT; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); HUD

SEEKING PEACE
In 1906, Theodore Roosevelt became the first US President to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, for his work ending a war between Japan and Russia.

A library exhibit depicting Theodore Roosevelt at the White House

What are the Badlands?

The new library is located in the Badlands (above), a region that spans several states, including North Dakota. It's defined by canyons and unusual rock formations created millions of years ago by ice and erosion. The name describes the region's harsh terrain, translated from *mako sica* in the Lakota language.

Presidential library opens in North Dakota

On July 4, the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library opened in Medora, North Dakota, to honor the legacy of the nation's 26th US President. Roosevelt served from 1901 to 1909 and is known for his commitment to environmental conservation.

Who was Theodore Roosevelt?

Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt was born in New York City in 1858. He entered New York state politics in 1882 but soon moved to North Dakota, where he lived and explored the outdoors for two years. After serving in the Spanish-American War, he was elected Vice President in 1900. When President William McKinley was assassinated (killed for political reasons) in 1901, Roosevelt took over the office. As President, he created five national parks and set aside more than 100 million acres of land for conservation. He died in 1919 at age 60.

How was the library established?

The practice of former Presidents building libraries to showcase their historical collections wasn't in place during Roosevelt's lifetime. In 2014, the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library Foundation formed and began raising money. Construction began in 2023. To honor Roosevelt's appreciation of nature, the building was designed to use renewable energy sources instead of fossil fuels that pollute the environment. President Donald Trump visited the library before it opened to donate Roosevelt's Medal of Honor (highest military award), which was presented after his death and had been stored at the White House.

What is in the library?

The nearly 100,000-square-foot library features interactive galleries designed to tell the story of Roosevelt's life. Exhibits re-create his cabin in North Dakota and the White House during his time in office, while artifacts on display include his war uniform and a diary from 1884. Outside the library, visitors can tour a nearly one-mile boardwalk to enjoy expansive views of an area of the US called the Badlands (see box above). The library also acknowledges harmful statements Roosevelt made about Native Americans.

What happened at the opening?

About 3,500 people attended the opening ceremony, which featured speeches by North Dakota politicians, including Governor Kelly Armstrong. Roosevelt's great-great grandson Theodore Roosevelt V spoke and said he hopes visitors "come face to face with history, with each other, and with the natural world" at the library.

WORD OF THE WEEK

PLATYPUS

"Platypus" is made up of two words from ancient Greek: *platys* ("flat") and *pous* ("feet"). In the 18th century, the creature confused scientists because it appeared to have the bill of a duck, the body of an otter, the tail of a beaver, and webbed feet. They called it *platypus anatinus* ("flat-footed duck").

THE WEEK IN HISTORY

July 24, 1969
Apollo 11 crew splashes down

On July 24, 1969, the astronauts from the Apollo 11 Moon landing mission splashed down to Earth. Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins landed in a capsule in the Pacific Ocean about 950 miles from Hawaii. They were picked up by the US Navy ship *Hornet*. People across the country celebrated the astronauts' safe return by setting off firecrackers and ringing church bells.

The capsule

Lindsey Graham

US senator is remembered

Lindsey Graham, a US senator from South Carolina and an Air Force veteran who advocated for providing military support to Ukraine and Israel, died on July 11 at age 71. The Republican was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1994, before he began serving in the Senate in 2003. On July 13, Graham's sister, Darline Graham Nordone, was appointed by South Carolina's governor to serve the remaining months of his term.

Kelsey Pfendler

Rower makes historic journey

Kelsey Pfendler, age 32, has become the first US woman (as well as the fastest male or female) to row solo from California to Hawaii. On May 21, she embarked on the 2,400-mile journey aboard her 21-foot boat. On July 3, after nearly 44 days, she arrived in Honolulu. "If any part of this made at least one person feel a little bit more powerful..., I couldn't ask for anything else," she said.

The winner

Prestigious prize for cheddar

At the 2026 International Cheese & Dairy Awards, one of the world's largest cheese competitions, an American cheddar that can be found at many grocery stores earned gold for Best USA Cheese in the Mild Cheddar category. Cabot Mild Cheddar came out on top in a contest that was judged blind by experts from more than 35 countries who evaluated cheeses for their texture, aroma, and flavor.

Events are planned across the country to promote inclusion.

DID YOU KNOW? More than 70 million adults in the US have a disability.

Disability Pride Month is celebrated

July is Disability Pride Month in the US. The month celebrates people with disabilities, recognizes their rights and achievements, and fosters a sense of pride within the disability community. This year's theme is "The World Works Better With Us," which focuses on visibility and the leadership of people with disabilities.

The timing of Disability Pride Month coincides with the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), which was signed into law on July 26, 1990. The ADA bans discrimination against Americans with disabilities, requiring that they have the same opportunities to participate in society as everyone else. This includes equal access to businesses, public transportation, government services, and job opportunities.

The colors that symbolize the Disability Pride movement

The first Disability Pride Day took place in Boston in 1990, and the observation expanded to the full month of July 25 years later. In 2019, writer Ann Magill created the original Disability Pride flag. It features many colors to symbolize different kinds of disabilities, including physical, emotional, and sensory (such as blindness and deafness).

Disability Pride celebrations have been taking place across the US. New York state kicked off the month on July 8 with an event in Albany that included a performance by Flame, a band made up of musicians with disabilities. Major League Baseball teams, such as the St. Louis Cardinals, have hosted Disability Pride Nights at their home games.

A Cultural Connections event will take place in Frederick, Maryland, on July 15 to recognize the contributions of the city's disability community. On July 25, the Museum of Science in Boston, Massachusetts, will celebrate researchers who are studying how to increase accessibility. Also that day, the 23rd Annual Chicago Disability Pride Parade will take place in Illinois. In Oklahoma City, people can take part in the ADA Solidarity Walk on July 26.

THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

"Large amount of mystery apples wash up on NC beach" *UPI*

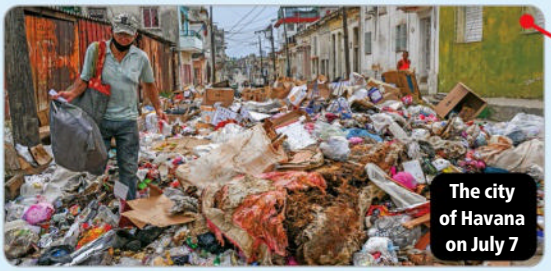
GETTY IMAGES (2); ANN MAGILL; US SENATE; KODIAK GREENWOOD/FOR THE S.F. CHRONICLE; CABOT CREAMERY; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: CHAD ZIEMENDORF/TR LIBRARY; GETTY IMAGES (3)

Around the world

Marine Le Pen

France
Politician will run despite conviction

Marine Le Pen, leader of the National Rally party, said she plans to run in France's 2027 presidential election despite being found guilty of misusing money from the European Union (EU, a group of 27 nations). Judges said Le Pen and her party took $3.2 million intended for EU business and used it for political work. She was ordered to wear an electronic monitor to track her movements, but she has appealed the ruling to France's top court.


The city of Havana on July 7

Cuba
Protests over power outages

People across Cuba protested as the country experienced its third and fourth nationwide blackouts this year, with some areas having no power for 70 hours. Residents banged pots and pans on July 7 to express their anger at the outages, which resulted from fuel shortages. The US has been blocking shipments of fuel and other goods to the island, causing an energy crisis and affecting services such as deliveries and trash pickup.

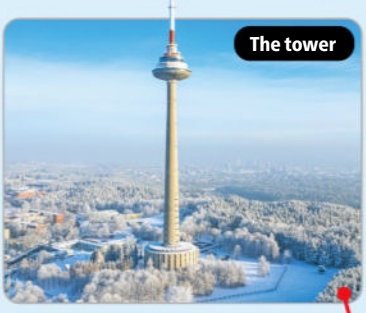
A Guatemalan beaded lizard

Guatemala City, Guatemala
Project to save endangered lizards

Conservationists are breeding Guatemalan beaded lizards in an effort to save the species from extinction. The reptiles, native to Guatemala's Motagua Valley, are some of the most endangered lizards on Earth. An estimated 500 to 700 adults remain in the wild. Experts have been incubating (helping to hatch) eggs from the species and will release baby lizards into the wild next year.

Vilnius, Lithuania
Revolving restaurant reopens

One of Europe's tallest revolving restaurants has reopened after a renovation. The Milky Way restaurant is located at the top of a TV tower, allowing diners to enjoy their meals from about 540 feet in the air. Every hour, the restaurant rotates all the way around, showing off a full 360-degree view of Vilnius, Lithuania's capital city.


The tower

South Africa
People forced out

As part of a plan to manage immigration, South Africa's government has removed more than 53,000 people from the country in the past month. Many of them were sent back to their countries of origin, including Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. The plan was put into place after recent protests called for the government to more tightly control who enters South Africa and to remove immigrants who are there without legal permission.

Immigrants preparing to leave

AP; GETTY IMAGES (5); KYODO; ADOBE STOCK; SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

Around the world

Russia's Olympic logo

Russia
Athletes allowed at Olympics

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that it intends to let Russian athletes compete in the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California. The Russian team was banned in 2016 after athletes were accused of cheating and again after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Russian officials will still not be invited to events.

Flooding in Nanning

China
Storms cause massive evacuations

Nearly 2 million people were evacuated as two tropical storms struck parts of China. Tropical storm Maysak brought heavy rain and winds to south and central China on July 3–6, causing the city of Nanning to flood. Then, on July 11, Typhoon (hurricane) Bavi hit eastern China. Buildings were damaged, trees blew over, and more areas flooded. Other countries, including Vietnam, Japan, and the Philippines, were also affected.

The airport

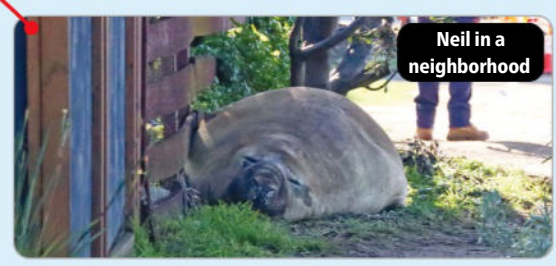
Wajima, Japan
Pokémon theme added to airport

An airport in Japan is full of Pokémon after it was redesigned to attract more visitors. The Noto Peninsula was once a tourist destination, but visits dropped as the area recovered from a 2024 earthquake. At the facility's reopening on July 6, it was renamed "Noto Satoyama Pokémon With You Airport." Travelers can now see 111 monsters in decorations around the airport, access special videos and products, and enjoy Pokémon-themed food.

Aalborg, Denmark
Santas in summer

It was Christmas in July as dozens of Santas, Mrs. Clauses, and elves from around the globe gathered at the annual World Santa Claus Congress. The event was created in 1957 to entertain children but now serves as a popular gathering for professional holiday performers. For four days, attendees took part in parades and activities such as gingerbread eating and gift wrapping. "We have the true Santa spirit," said one participant.

Attendees


Neil in a neighborhood

Tasmania, Australia
Neil the seal returns to the sea

After causing chaos in coastal Tasmania, a southern elephant seal named Neil has returned to the ocean. The one-ton mammal went viral as millions of people viewed videos of him relaxing in residential areas and crushing signs and traffic cones. Officials said on July 9 that Neil had "returned safely to the sea," and wildlife experts said he will likely come ashore again next year.

Should all zoos be closed?

DID YOU KNOW? About 5,000 years ago, people in Egypt and Mesopotamia kept dolphins, bears, and giraffes in private collections.

Zoos help many species, but some people say animals should never be locked up.

What you need to know

- **Following thousands of years in which people kept wild animals, the first modern public zoo opened in Paris, France, in 1793.**
- **Early zoos like this kept animals in very small enclosures. They were mostly for people's entertainment.**
- **Today, many zoos are different. Enclosures are bigger and built to resemble natural habitats. And many zoos contribute to conservation by breeding endangered species to release into the wild.**

Worldwide, there are about 300 fully accredited zoos, aquariums, and other animal-care facilities. Being accredited by an organization such as the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) means they offer the highest level of care to their animals, from keeping polar bear habitats cool enough to sourcing the most nutritious eucalyptus leaves for koalas. These facilities also educate visitors on the importance of protecting animals and invest millions of dollars in conservation programs to save at-risk species. But many say that's still not good enough and animals should live only in the wild. What do you think? Should all zoos be closed?

Yes—animals need to be free

Zoos are working hard to make animal enclosures bigger and more natural these days, but the animals still have limited space. That's especially hard for big species like elephants that roam freely in the wild. And many studies have shown that animals like chimpanzees and orangutans can suffer from stress and heart disease when kept in captivity. Living in a zoo can also make animals lonely, which affects their mental health. There are other ways to make people aware of the wonder of animals, like TV shows, photos, and books. No one has ever seen a real dinosaur, but that doesn't stop us from being fascinated by them, right?

No—they're saving many species

It wouldn't make sense to close all zoos—some do amazing work to bring endangered species back from the brink. This year, for example, US facilities welcomed the birth of critically endangered red ruffed lemurs, eastern bongos, and African penguins. And seeing an animal on TV is nothing compared to seeing it in real life. Zoos educate us about species and the threats they face, but they also inspire us to fall in love with animals—which will motivate us to protect them. Besides, many species are endangered because their wilderness habitats and food sources are gone. They'd have nowhere to go if the zoos that care for them closed.

YES Three reasons all zoos should be closed

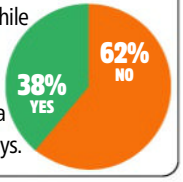
1. **Zoos have improved, but they simply can't provide enough space for animals to wander freely inside them.**
2. **Studies have shown that captivity affects animals' physical and mental well-being.**
3. **We don't need to keep animals captive for our own purposes. We can learn about them in so many other ways.**

NO Three reasons all zoos should not be closed

1. **Many zoos are doing vital work to protect endangered species and boost their numbers in captivity and in the wild.**
2. **Seeing animals in person makes us care about them and inspires us to work to protect them.**
3. **Some animals no longer have natural habitats or food sources in the wild.**

LAST ISSUE'S POLL

Last week, we asked if food has gotten too spicy. Most of you (62%) said your meals are not overly hot, while others (38%) think there's too much of a kick these days.



What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think all zoos should be closed or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

The goal of the big debate is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

GETTY IMAGES

Making culinary history

Chef Penelope Wong has earned one of the highest honors in US cooking.

Penelope Wong, chef and owner of Yuan Wonton in Denver, Colorado, has won the prestigious James Beard Award for Best Chef 2026 in the Mountain region (which encompasses Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming). Prior to receiving the award, she was a finalist three years in a row.

Wong grew up in a Chinese-Thai household in Denver and is the daughter of immigrants from Thailand. She began working in her parents' Chinese restaurant at age 12, learning recipes and techniques passed down through generations. After earning a degree in psychology from the University of North Carolina, Wong returned to Denver to pursue her culinary passion. She started as a cook at a country club and eventually became its youngest-ever executive chef.

FOOD ORIGINS

Wontons, one of China's oldest dumpling styles, are believed to date back more than 2,000 years to the Han Dynasty.

In 2019, Wong launched a food truck in Denver with her husband, making her signature chili wontons. They turned it into a permanent restaurant, named Yuan Wonton, in 2023. It earned national attention and was named to *The New York Times* list of America's Best New Restaurants in 2024. Wong said her cooking is inspired by her upbringing and family recipes. "It all starts with a memory and a flavor, and we go from there," she told *Star-Chefs* magazine.

Accepting the James Beard Award, Wong called it "a dream come true." She told CBS News it was also emotional. "As a child, these are the flavors that, when you go to school with certain boxed lunches, you don't want to open them up because you're being made fun of for them. And to be celebrated for it is truly special," she said.

Penelope Wong

Young fossil finder

Corbin Bullard, a sixth-grader from Clearwater, Kansas, is preparing to enter his discovery of an 85-million-year-old tylosaurus fossil in the geology competition at his local county fair. Bullard, an aspiring paleontologist, found the 15-foot-long fossil during a field trip with his 4-H geology club last fall. He spent nearly 30 hours cleaning dirt off the bones. The fossil could help researchers learn more about prehistoric marine reptiles. "I didn't know what it was, but I knew that it was something big," Bullard told reporters.

Corbin Bullard

Blake Wilson

Science recognition

Blake Wilson, a professor at Duke University, has been awarded the 2026 Merkin Prize in Biomedical Technology for his decades of work on hearing loss treatment. He is one of five scientists to receive the prize for developing the modern cochlear implant, a device that enables deaf and hearing-impaired people to perceive sound and speech. Wilson is widely recognized as the principal developer of the device, which has helped restore hearing for more than 1 million people worldwide. He also chose not to patent his work to make it more affordable and globally accessible.

OVERHEARD

"As a parent, you need your kids to take a nap. In the NBA, we all take naps before the game."

Boston Celtics star and parent Jayson Tatum, who has published the second book in his *Baby Dunks-a-Lot* series, about a toddler who becomes a basketball star

HUGE GALDONES FOR JAMES BEARD FOUNDATION; WENDY BULLARD; COURTESY OF DUKE UNIVERSITY; GETTY IMAGES

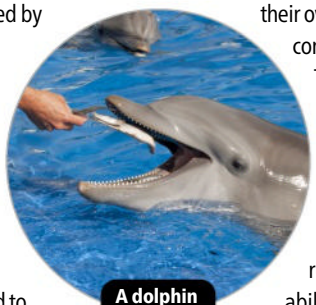
BEST BROS Two adult male bottlenose dolphins will often form a bond for life, helping each other find food and mates.

Bottlenose dolphins

Humans influence dolphin friendships

Researchers from Brookfield Zoo Chicago have been monitoring bottlenose dolphins in Sarasota Bay, Florida, for more than 56 years. This research, which is the world's longest-running study of a wild dolphin population, offers a rare opportunity to track individual dolphins throughout their lives. New results from the study have yielded insights into the friendships of the famously social and intelligent animals and how they are affected by interactions with humans.

Experts from this program teamed up with researchers from Oregon State University to analyze data collected between 1995 and 2012. During this time, a series of harmful algal blooms killed many of the fish the dolphins eat. Dolphins were forced to compete with each other for the bay's few remaining fish or expand their search for prey in order to get enough to eat.



A dolphin being fed

After the blooms, more dolphins started looking for food near humans. Some took bait from fishing lines, swam near boats to snap up fish that were thrown away, or directly approached humans to beg for a meal. These techniques put them in danger, since dolphins are often struck by boats and injured by fishing gear. Yet the behavior spread quickly, and some dolphins continued taking these risks even after the crisis had passed.

Human interaction also influenced the animals' social circles. Dolphins that frequently foraged for food near humans tended to associate with other dolphins that had similar habits. The dolphins that chose to avoid people and hunt for their own meals spent more time with companions that did the same. This was true regardless of age, sex, or the specific area each individual animal inhabited—three factors that usually affect dolphins' choice of friends.

Social networks play a role in bottlenose dolphins' ability to learn and survive, and those connections may have caused risky behaviors to spread from one dolphin to another. This raises concerns about how human activity could be changing the animals' lives. Experts say people should not feed wild dolphins or use fishing gear near them. Study co-author Randall Wells said, "The best way to help wild dolphins is to let them remain wild."

Friendships across species

Animals can strike up surprising friendships. In 2011, for example, Busch Gardens Tampa Bay brought in a Labrador retriever puppy named Mtani to help a cheetah cub named Kasi learn to socialize. The pair (pictured above) became fast friends, playing together and developing a way of communicating with each other.

In the wild, a new study found that cross-species relationships often help animals access food or resources. For example, certain African birds guide humans to hidden honeycomb so they'll cut it open and leave beeswax behind. Coral trout and grouper fish invite octopuses and eels to team up against prey. But the fish need to watch out! An octopus may hit one if it doesn't do its part during the hunt.

A California condor

Landmark flight for rare condor

A California condor recently flew into the state of Oregon for the first time on record since 1904. The 2-year-old female bird, known as Condor B9, was released into California last fall through the Yurok Tribe's condor restoration program. Using a satellite monitor attached to her right wing, experts tracked her historic flight. They say it is a sign that she is adjusting well to life in the wild.

California condors were declared endangered in 1967, and by 1982 only 22 remained. To save the species, conservation programs began breeding the birds in captivity. The Yurok Tribe has successfully released 23 condors into the wild since 2022 and hopes to release more this summer.

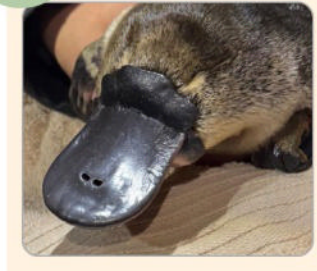
Condor B9 flew through Oregon for about 80 miles as part of a 380-mile, four-day trip that ended with a return to California. Condors are highly social birds, so B9's journey could motivate others to venture into Oregon. "Our condors are doing exactly what condors need to do—exploring and learning the landscape in a way that is very wild and free," said Yurok wildlife director Tiana Williams Claussen.

Animal of the week: Blue-fronted lorikeet

Researchers spotted the blue-fronted lorikeet, a small, elusive parrot, in the mountains of Indonesia for the first time in 12 years. Scientists had thought the species was lost, but the sighting gives them hope that the rare bird still exists in the wild.

- **LIFESPAN:** 10 to 15 years in the wild
- **HABITAT:** High forests on the island of Buru
- **SIZE:** About 6 inches
- **DIET:** Nectar, pollen, and soft fruits
- **FUN FACT:** This bird's tongue has a brush-like tip that can spread out to collect nectar and pollen.

Good week / Bad week



Platypuses
Three years after a program reintroduced 10 platypuses to the Royal National Park in Sydney, Australia, the local population has expanded to 20. Before 2023, the species had been missing from the park for more than 50 years.

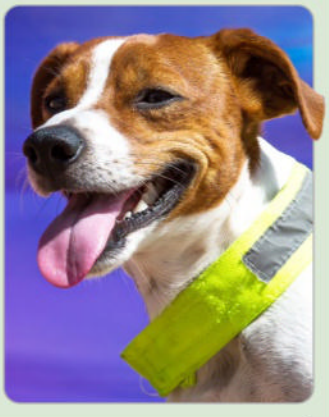
Blueberries
According to scientists in North Carolina, long-horned beetles are destroying the state's blueberry crops. The beetles eat their way through blueberry bushes and lay their eggs inside the plants, where their young damage the stems and roots.

GETTY IMAGES (4); UNSW CENTRE FOR ECOSYSTEM SCIENCE; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES (2); BUSCH GARDENS

Ask an expert: "Why do dogs pant?"

Eloise, 11, Wyoming

Julia Espinosa
Canine psychology researcher, York University, Canada



When dogs are hot or physically active, they can pant to lower their body temperature. When this happens, the dogs have a relaxed face and ears, loose body, and soft tongue. Panting can also indicate emotions. If the dog has flattened ears or is licking its lips or pacing, it may feel stressed.

Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to *hello@theweekjunior.com*. Find out more about York University at yorku.ca.

A superstar league

Female athletes return to professional baseball for the first time in 72 years.

The Women's Professional Baseball League (WPBL), the first pro baseball league for women since 1954, kicks off its first season in August.

A game in 1947

Pioneer players

Women's participation in baseball in the US began in the 19th century. From 1898 through 1931, Lizzie Arlington, Alta Weiss, Jackie Mitchell, and other female athletes played in professional games. Mitchell reportedly struck out Yankees legends Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig in 1931. In 1943, the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (AAGPBL) was founded by Chicago Cubs owner Philip K. Wrigley to keep baseball going while men served in World War II (1939–1945). More than 600 women, including stars such as Maybelle Blair (see box below), competed through 1954. An exhibit at the National Baseball Hall of Fame in New York pays tribute to that era, which inspired the 1992 film *A League of Their Own*.

WPBL Commissioner Justine Siegal

Starting a modern league

The WPBL was co-founded in 2024 by Justine Siegal, who will serve as commissioner, and business executive Keith Stein. Siegal has a long history with baseball. In 2015, she became the first woman to coach an MLB (Major League Baseball) team, the Oakland A's. She also founded Baseball for All, an organization dedicated to increasing opportunities for girls to play the game. "Baseball is America's pastime, but the professional game hasn't evolved to reflect the diversity of those who play, watch, and love this sport," Siegal said. "That's about to change."

SPORTS TRIVIA
Vassar College formed the first organized women's baseball team in 1866.

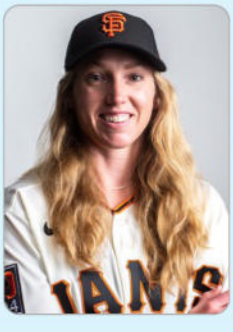
DID YOU KNOW?
Little League Baseball started allowing girls to play in 1974.

At the 2025 tryouts for the Women's Professional Baseball League at Nationals Park in Washington, DC

Baseball trailblazers

Alyssa Nakken

She made history by becoming the first female to coach full-time in the MLB when she joined the San Francisco Giants coaching staff in 2020.

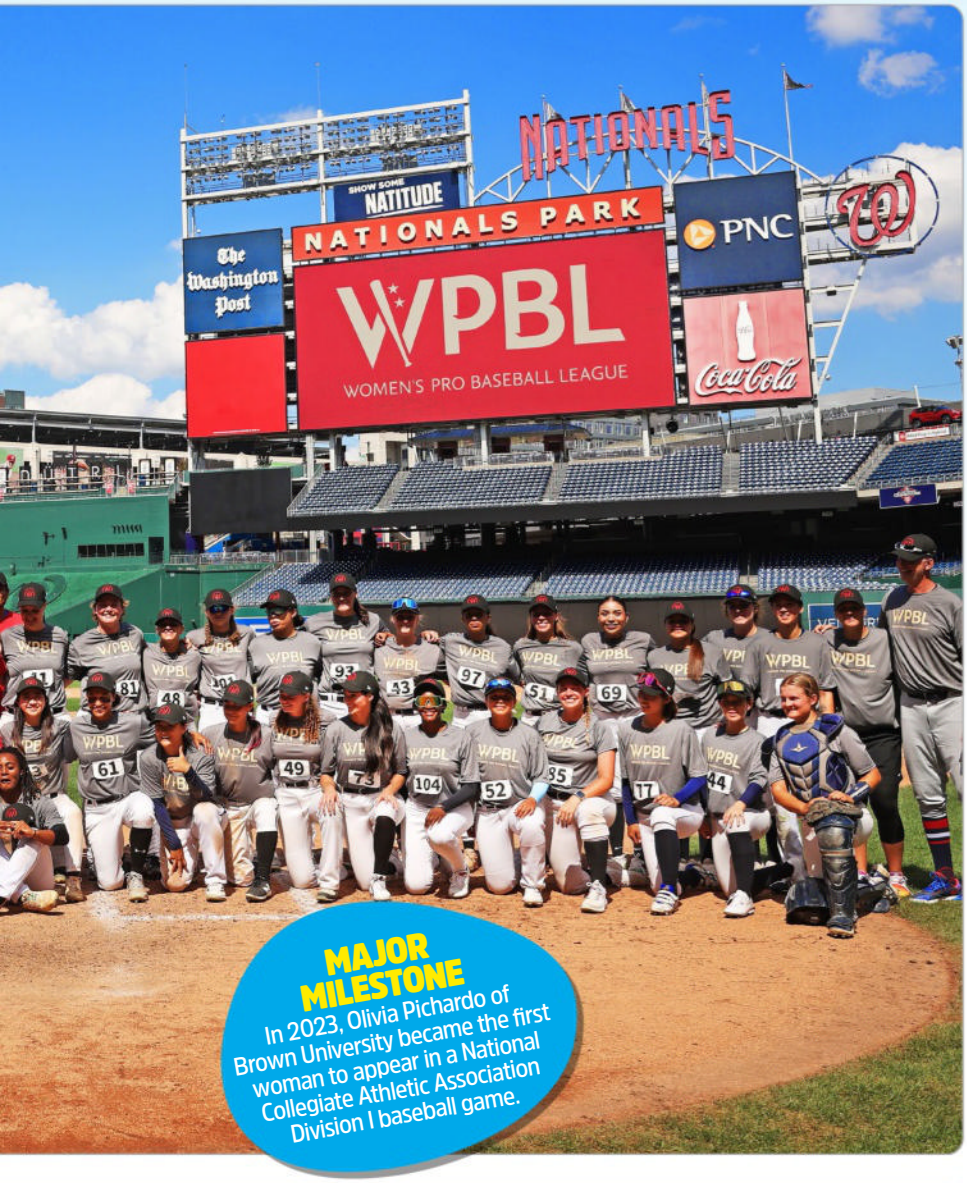


Kim Ng

In 2020, Ng became the first female general manager of an MLB team when the Miami Marlins chose her for the job. In 2025, she became the first commissioner of the Athletes Unlimited Softball League.

GETTY IMAGES (6); WOMEN'S PRO BASEBALL LEAGUE (4)

# of their own



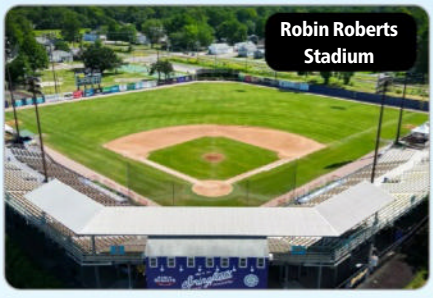
MAJOR MILESTONE
In 2023, Olivia Pichardo of Brown University became the first woman to appear in a National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I baseball game.

Effa Manley

She was the first woman elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame, in 2006. Manley was a co-owner of the Newark Eagles, a Negro Leagues team who won their World Series in 1946.

Maybelle Blair

Now age 99 and a passionate advocate for women in baseball, Blair pitched for the Peoria Redwings in the AAGPBL. She has been named the honorary chair of the WPBL's advisory board.


Robin Roberts Stadium

How it will work

There will be four teams in the WPBL, each representing a city: the Boston Hunters, the Los Angeles Queens, the New York Heights, and the San Francisco Firebells. All the games, which will air live on WPBL's official YouTube channel, will be played at Robin Roberts Stadium in Springfield, Illinois, a city with historic ties to women's baseball. (One of the first pro women's games was played there in 1875.) Opening Day will be August 1, with Los Angeles and New York scheduled to play the league's first game. The season, which runs through September 6, will consist of 30 seven-inning games. Two weeks of playoffs will lead to the championship series starting on September 16.

Kelsie Whitmore

Mo'ne Davis

Game changers to watch

To fill team rosters, the league's draft was held on November 20, when 120 players were chosen. Kelsie Whitmore, the first woman to play in a pro baseball league affiliated with the MLB, was selected by San Francisco as the league's number one overall draft pick. Ayami Sato, a star pitcher from Japan, was chosen second by Los Angeles. Mo'ne Davis, who made history in 2014 at age 13 when she became the first girl to pitch a winning game and a shutout in a Little League Baseball World Series, was also selected by Los Angeles. Other top players who were drafted included Hyeonah Kim and Alli Schroder (picked by Boston) and Denae Benites and Kylee Lahners (chosen by New York). "It's just a really cool opportunity that's not just for me but for a lot of young girls," Whitmore told MLB.com after the draft. "They now have a platform to look up to."

FLYING SURVIVORS
Modern birds are the only dinosaur species that survived an asteroid strike about 66 million years ago that killed off most life on Earth.

An artist's rendering of Jian changmaensis preying on a bird

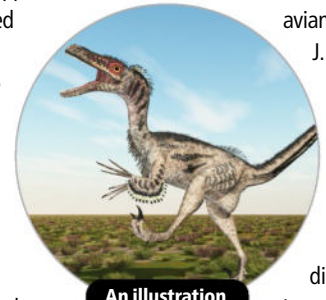
Feathered dinosaur species found

Scientists have identified a new bird-like dinosaur species that had feathers and four "wings" and may have been a fierce predator. Called Jian changmaensis, the creature lived in northwestern China about 120 million years ago and could be the key to solving a fossil mystery that has puzzled scientists for years.

Paleontologists (scientists who study fossils) found parts of J. changmaensis' upper shoulder and arm in an area called the Changma Basin. The word "Jian" refers to a winged creature from Chinese mythology, and "changmaensis" refers to the location where it was found.

J. changmaensis was a microraptor, a type of dinosaur that's related to velociraptors. Though J. changmaensis' arms and legs were covered with feathers, giving them the appearance of wings, it was not a bird. It could not fly but probably climbed trees and glided through the air, possibly on the hunt for prey.

That predatory nature is what tipped scientists off to J. changmaensis' role in a prehistoric mystery. Hundreds of bird fossils have been found in the Changma Basin. Many of them were crushed or broken, which scientists said indicates that the birds had been attacked by a predator.



An illustration of a velociraptor

They had never found direct fossil evidence of that predator, however, until they identified J. changmaensis. Previous research has shown that microraptors hunted other animals, including birds. The team thinks J. changmaensis may have been the creature that preyed on the birds, leaving their bones behind.

J. changmaensis also provides a link between dinosaurs and birds. Some dinosaurs were avian (related to birds) and others, like J. changmaensis, were non-avian. The avian dinosaurs evolved (changed over millions of years) into the modern birds that fill our skies today. Though J. changmaensis was not a bird, it was closely related to the dinosaurs that did evolve into birds. It was also the only non-avian dinosaur found near the bird fossils.

Knowing more about early bird relatives like J. changmaensis can give scientists insight into the coexistence of dinosaurs and birds and how they evolved. "Learning about early birds and their close non-bird dinosaur relatives gives us a better understanding of what made the group of birds that survived so special," said Jingmai O'Connor, a scientist with the Field Museum of Chicago who helped identify the new species.

A fish-eating raptor

A rendering of Kank australis

Scientists have identified a new dinosaur called Kank australis that may have hunted by thrusting its beak into water to catch fish. Kank australis is similar to raptors, although raptors hunted mainly on land. Kank australis lived in southern Patagonia in South America about 70 million years ago. It was identified from tooth, spine, and toe fossils recovered from a site in Argentina.

Kank australis' neck bones are similar to those of modern-day herons, suggesting that it used its neck to catch fish like those birds do. It had a long snout and many teeth, which would have been useful for fishing. Kank australis' remains were also found near fish fossils, suggesting that the two were closely connected. However, it most likely also hunted other animals, including frogs and mammals.

Nature helps healing in rooftop hospital ward

A hospital in London has opened the UK's first rooftop intensive care garden, where critically ill patients can enjoy fresh air and nature.

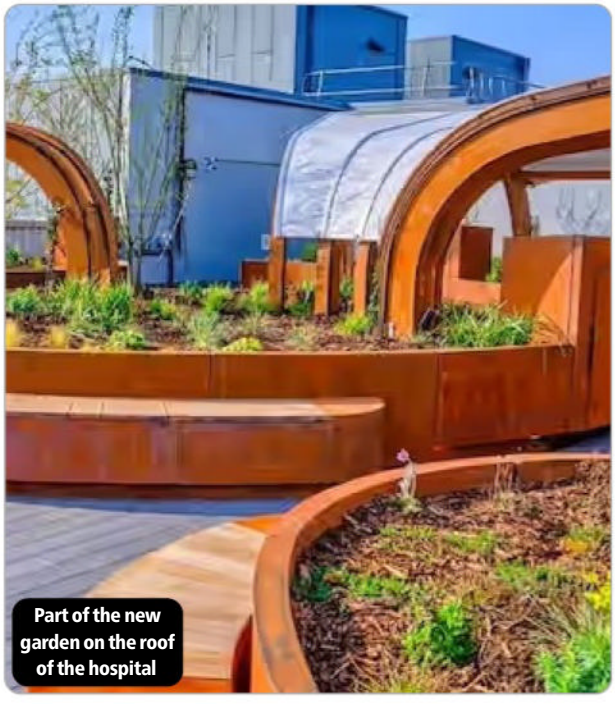
Like most hospitals, King's College Hospital has an intensive care unit (ICU) where the most seriously ill patients are cared for. The new outdoor area has six beds covered by canopies for shade. Patients can be connected to oxygen supplies, feeding tubes, and other essential equipment through built-in weatherproof boxes. Plants and flowers like jasmine and lavender are there for patients to touch and smell.

HEALTHY BUZZ
Some hospitals have beehives in their gardens and sell or donate the honey to raise money for charity.

For patients who stay weeks or months in the ICU, time outside can be crucial to recovery. "When you're stuck inside all day, there's no motivation to try and get back to normal life," Hollie Allan, a patient waiting for a heart operation, told the BBC news service. She said she would use the outdoor ward even if there was a storm. Staff can also use it for their breaks.

Many hospitals have gardens that patients can visit, but it's not always possible for the sickest patients to access them. Studies show that time in nature can reduce stress, lower blood pressure, and improve well-being.

Doctors at the hospital will monitor patients' heart rates, breathing rates, and pain levels and see if access to the garden reduces the length of their time there. If the project is successful, the idea could be adopted by more hospitals.


Part of the new garden on the roof of the hospital

The nebula (circled) resembles a seahorse.

New image of Horsehead nebula

A new image of the Horsehead nebula offers a rare view of the massive cloud of dust and gas. Greg Meyer, an astrophotographer (space photographer) captured the image.

The Horsehead nebula, named for its resemblance to a seahorse or horse's head, is about 1,600 light-years from Earth. (A light-year is the distance light travels in one Earth year, about 6 trillion miles.) The nebula was discovered in the 1800s and is one of the most photographed objects in space. Images have been captured by the Hubble, James Webb, and Spitzer space telescopes.

The horse-like shape of the nebula is often hard to capture in images. Meyer achieved this feat using a telescope and an astronomy camera set up in Phoenix, Arizona. With this equipment, he collected many images over 115 hours between November 2025 and March 2026. Using specialized computer software, he then digitally "stacked" and adjusted the images to create the final one.

AMAZING INVENTION

Spray for dogs with bad breath

Dogs sometimes need to freshen up.

Dogs are delightful, but they don't always have such fresh breath. Scientists may have found a new way of addressing this issue by using molasses, a thick, syrupy substance that's made when sugar is produced.

Molasses contains natural chemicals called polyphenols, which researchers used to develop a product they sprayed into the mouths of 10 dogs. Within an hour, the pets' breath was less smelly. When the team tested the spray over 30 days, the animals' mouths contained lower levels of bacteria linked to bad breath.

KING'S COLLEGE HOSPITAL/NHS; GREG MEYER; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: ILLUSTRATION BY LEWIS LAROSA, COLORIZED BY JÃO CANOLA; GETTY IMAGES; GABRIEL DIAZ YANTEN

Photos of the week

Glow up
A light installation is part of a music festival in Spain.

Meal prep
In the UK, a European robin brings food back to its nest.

GETTY IMAGES (6)

Photos of the week

Buzzing about
A bee flies over a lotus flower at a park in China.

Art history
An exhibit in Colombia features archaeological objects that have been returned to the country.

Animal pack
FIFA World Cup mascots gather at a match in Mexico.

Friendly face
A sunflower smiles in a field in Turkey.

Jude Bellingham of England

Lautaro Martínez of Argentina

GETTING A WORKOUT
According to FIFA, soccer referees run about seven to eight miles while chasing the action in a match.

Mikel Merino of Spain

Kylian Mbappé of France

Top teams shine at World Cup

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is almost over, and it has turned out to be a historic competition. For the first time since 1990, the four teams that made the semifinals were four previous champions. In another first, they also were the world's four top-ranked national teams: France, Argentina, Spain, and England.

Several of this year's top goal scorers played in the quarterfinals, including Lionel Messi of Argentina, Kylian Mbappé and Ousmane Dembélé of France, Erling Haaland of Norway, and Jude Bellingham and Harry Kane of England.

Erling Haaland

On July 9, Mbappé and Dembélé helped France claim a spot in the semifinals by scoring in their team's 2–0 win over Morocco. The next day, Spain made the semis after defeating Belgium, 2–1. The score was 1–1 after the first half and remained tied late into the second half. In the final moments, Spain's Mikel Merino pounced on a loose ball in front of the goal and made a shot that secured the victory.

The other two quarterfinal matches were played on July 11. In the first one, England defeated Norway, 2–1. After Andreas Schjelderup opened the scoring for Norway in the 36th minute, Bellingham tied the game just before the halftime break. The match eventually went to extra time, when Bellingham scored again.

In the last quarterfinal match, Argentina beat Switzerland, 3–1. Alexis Mac Allister of Argentina opened the scoring early on after receiving an assist from Messi. Switzerland leveled the score in the middle of the second half, but five minutes later, their player Breel Embolo received a red card for two violations. He had to leave the game, and his team had to continue with one fewer player on the field. The teams remained tied for the rest of regulation. In extra time, Argentina's Julian Alvarez scored in the 112th minute, and Lautaro Martinez sealed the win with a goal in the final minute.

The semifinal matches began on July 14, when Spain defeated France (see box at right). When *The Week Junior* went to press the following day, the match between Argentina and England was underway. The winner of that match will play Spain in the World Cup final on July 19.

Spain advances to the final

On July 14, Spain (above) beat France, 2–0, to make its second World Cup final ever and first since 2010, when they won the title. France had been vying for its third straight World Cup final.

In the 20th minute of the match, Lamine Yamal of Spain drew a penalty, and Mikel Oyarzabal converted the penalty kick for a 1–0 lead. It was the first time France had trailed at this World Cup. Spain doubled its lead in the 58th minute when Pedro Porro scored off a pass from Dani Olmo.

Spain is the reigning European champion and has played 37 straight matches without a loss, dating back to 2024.

TASTY TREAT
Each year, Wimbledon serves an estimated 283,000 orders of its signature dish, strawberries and cream.

Jannik Sinner, left, and Linda Noskova

Thrilling finals at Wimbledon

Wimbledon, one of the four top international tennis tournaments known as Grand Slams, ended on July 12 after nearly two weeks of competition. In men's singles, Jannik Sinner won his second straight Wimbledon championship, and in women's singles, Linda Noskova won her first Grand Slam title. Since 2017, Wimbledon has had nine different women's champions, all first-time winners. On the men's side, only six different players have won since 2003.

The women's singles final on July 11 featured two players from the Czech Republic. In a three-set match that went on for nearly 2 ½ hours, ninth-seeded (ranked) Noskova beat 10th-seeded Karolina Muchova, 6–2, 5–7, 6–3. Noskova is the third Czech woman in the last four years to win the Wimbledon women's singles championship.

In the match, Noskova dominated the first set and had a 5–2 lead in the second set. Then Muchova made a furious comeback, winning five consecutive games to take the second set and force a winner-take-all third set. Noskova, however, won the first three games and Muchova was unable to bounce back a second time.

In the men's final the next day, Jannik Sinner of Italy, the top-seeded player, defeated second-seeded Alexander Zverev of Germany, 6–7, 7–6, 6–3, 6–4. This is Sinner's fifth Grand Slam title.

The competition was extremely close in the first two sets. Zverev won the first one in a tiebreak, and Sinner won the second in a tiebreak. After that, Sinner went on to take control of the match in the third and fourth sets, proving why he is the top-ranked men's player in the world.

COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Trent Lowe**

Team: **Junior Jazz Fever (basketball)**

"Coach Trent makes learning basketball fun. At one of our practices, he scrimmaged with us! He is very supportive and kind. He always makes each of our playing times fair. He can also snowboard and play tennis and soccer. All my friends think he is a great coach, and I do too! He loves to coach basketball. Whenever we make an error, he corrects us in a really kind way. That's why he's the best coach ever! He is also very strong. I love Coach Trent!" Rooney, 8, Utah

To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to *hello@theweekjunior.com.* Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

MORE BIG MOMENTS

Jordan Walker

BASEBALL

Major League Baseball held its All-Star Week festivities in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from July 10 to July 14. The first big competition, the Home Run Derby, took place at Citizens Bank Park on July 13. The derby started with eight competitors and had two elimination rounds before Kyle Schwarber of the Philadelphia Phillies and Jordan Walker of the St. Louis Cardinals faced off in the final round. Schwarber hit 11 homers and Walker hit 12, making him the first Cardinals player to ever win the derby. The next day, those two sluggers joined other top players from the American League (AL) and National League (NL) for the All-Star Game. The AL won, 4–0. At the end of the game, Cody Bellinger of the New York Yankees, who hit a two-run single in the first inning, was named the Most Valuable Player.

BASKETBALL

In the WNBA (Women's National Basketball Association), Minnesota Lynx head coach Cheryl Reeve broke the record for the most regular-season head-coaching wins in the league's history. She reached the milestone on July 8 by leading her team to her 380th victory, an 86–80 win over the Connecticut Sun. Reeve also holds the record for the most playoff wins.

GOLF

On July 12, Haeran Ryu of South Korea defeated Brooke Henderson of Canada in a sudden-death playoff to win the Amundi Evian Championship, one of the five major tournaments in women's golf. This is Ryu's second straight major tournament victory. She won the Women's PGA Championship on June 29.

GETTY IMAGES

The National Geographic Museum of Exploration

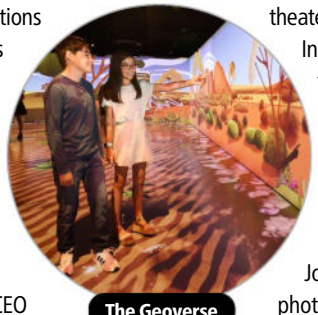
DID YOU KNOW?
The word "explore" comes from the Latin verb *explōrāre*, which means "to investigate, search out, or examine."

Museum of Exploration is open

National Geographic's new destination highlights decades of discoveries.

After four years of construction, the National Geographic Museum of Exploration (MOE) opened on June 26 in Washington, DC. The 100,000-square-foot building was designed to highlight exploration and scientific discoveries from around the world.

The museum is overseen by the National Geographic Society, an organization founded by a group of scholars, explorers, and scientists in 1888. It supports global expeditions and shares discoveries through its magazine, photography, and documentaries. "The Museum of Exploration marks a historic chapter in the Society's mission to advance exploration, science, education, and storytelling, bringing these experiences to life in ways that spark curiosity," the CEO of the Society, Jill Tiefenthaler, said.


The Geoverse

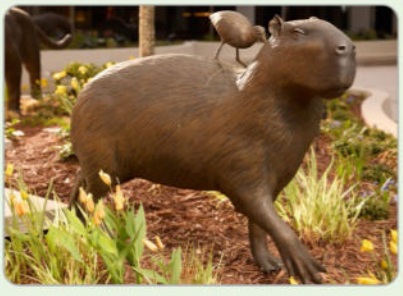
Inside the MOE, there are digital installations, photography exhibitions, and artifacts. The items represent the work of 15,000 explorers and include a Moon rock collected during NASA's Apollo 12 mission in 1969. One exhibition space, the Rolex Explorers Landing, is filled with tools, gear, and personal stories of scientists and conservationists. Among the items are a replica of a pressurized diving suit worn by marine biologist Sylvia Earle when she walked 1,250 feet underwater in the 1970s and a canoe from Steve Boyes' decade-long mapping of Africa's Okavango basin.

One of the museum's special features is that it has displays in the floors. As visitors walk around, they can look down and see things such as a mini replica of the Titanic shipwreck. Another highlight is the Geoverse, an immersive theater designed with kids in mind. In it, visitors watch panoramic films about wild landscapes and remote environments.

For a limited time, the MOE is showcasing *Photo Ark: Animals of Earth*. It is an exhibit of large wildlife portraits by Joel Sartore, who is working on photographing every species living in the world's zoos, aquariums, and wildlife sanctuaries. The project helps encourage people to protect endangered animals. "I challenge anyone to walk through that exhibit and not feel a sense of awe and a genuine pull to help," Tiefenthaler said.

She also described the MOE as a "forward-looking museum" and said, "We're hoping that will bring people here and really inspire that next generation of explorers."

Animal statues on display



Although there is a lot to see inside the National Geographic Museum of Exploration, the building's outdoor space is also a place for learning. The courtyard was designed to represent the world's biodiversity through six ecosystems: temperate forest, tropical forest, polar, grasslands, ocean, and desert.

There are bronze animal sculptures placed throughout the courtyard. They include a capybara (above) in the tropical forest area, a white-backed vulture in the grasslands, and an octopus in the ocean section. Animal footprints and touchable sculptures also fill the space. National Geographic Explorers and scientists ensured that details related to each animal's appearance and behavior were accurate. Visitors can learn more about the 20 species through a free augmented reality experience.

MEDIA HISTORY
In 1999, Fred Rogers was inducted into the Television Academy Hall of Fame to honor his contributions to children's media and public broadcasting.

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood

Mister Rogers comes to YouTube

Last month, Fred Rogers Productions launched an official YouTube channel for the classic children's series *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. It aims to give families around the world access to full episodes of the show, along with memorable clips and themed video collections.

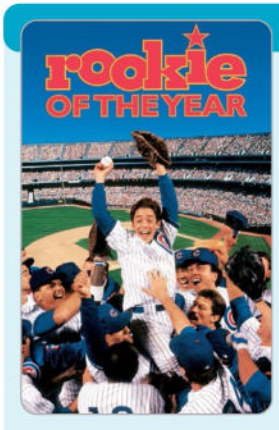
Mister Rogers' Neighborhood was created and hosted by Fred Rogers, who had studied child development and was a puppeteer, composer, and minister. It was a pioneering educational program that taught young viewers how to understand their feelings and experiences and be a part of their community. The show ran from 1968 to 2001, with 895 episodes in all.

The Neighborhood Trolley

In the show, Rogers talked directly to viewers about how they are special, shared videos about how things are made, and met interesting people, such as TV science educator Bill Nye. He would also send a small trolley into the Neighborhood of Make-Believe, where puppets and human characters helped teach lessons. Two popular videos on the channel have been one of Rogers with Koko the gorilla, who communicated with sign language, and one showing how crayons are made in a factory.

Kristin DiQuollo, creative director of the channel, told *The Week Junior* that even though the external world has changed since the show aired on TV, its messages are relevant today because children's internal worlds are still the same. In fact, she believes viewers of all ages will relate to the "timeless" life lessons about "dealing with feelings, connecting with people, being playful, being imaginative, exploring, and being curious."

READER RECOMMENDS



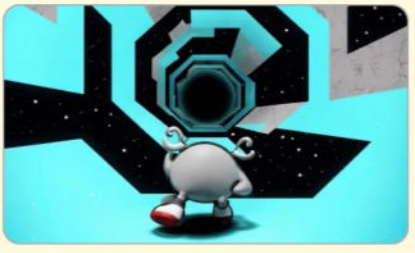
Rookie of the Year *PG (Disney+ or rent on major platforms)*
"This is an awesome movie! It is about 12-year-old Henry, who lives in Chicago and loves the Chicago Cubs. Henry plays Little League baseball, but he is not very good. One day at school, he trips and breaks his arm. After he gets his cast off, the doctor says Henry's tendons have healed too tightly but it shouldn't be a problem. At a Cubs game, Henry gets a ball that is hit into the stands, and when he throws it back onto the field, the ball reaches home plate! The Cubs are so impressed that they hire Henry to be their new pitcher. This is a very good choice for sleepovers and family movie nights." Anna, 10, Maine

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

3 MORE PICKS TO ENJOY THIS WEEK

WATCH: IYANU: THE WAR OF TWIN PRINCES

The TV series *Iyanu* is based on Nigerian graphic novels, and this prequel film is set 100 years before the show. It follows two prince brothers with very different personalities. Their father has a difficult time deciding who should be his heir, which leads to trouble in the kingdom. (HBO Max)



PLAY: RUN 3

Abbas, a 9-year-old reader of *The Week Junior*, recommends this endless-running platform game. You play it on a computer and use your keyboard to direct a character through floating, hole-filled tunnels in space. You have to jump the character over the holes and rotate the tunnels to make sure it doesn't fall out. (run3-online.io)

WATCH: DESCENDANTS: WICKED WONDERLAND

This is the fifth installment of Disney's musical films about the children of fairy-tale characters. In the last film, Red and Chloe time-traveled to make the evil Queen of Hearts nice. Now home, they face unexpected consequences and a new villain, Maddox Hatter. (Disney Channel, Disney+)

COURTESY FRED ROGERS PRODUCTIONS (2); DISNEY (2); LION FORGE ENTERTAINMENT; JOSEPH CLOUTIER; ON LEFT PAGE: COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY; REBECCA HALE/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC (2)

THIS WEEK'S BOOK

The Lions' Run

By Sara Pennypacker, illustrated by Jon Klassen

This suspenseful historical-fiction novel is set in France in 1944, at a time when soldiers in Germany's Nazi Party are controlling the country during World War II (1939–1945).

Lucas, an orphaned 13-year-old who is teased for being small and cowardly, stands up to older boys while rescuing a litter of kittens they are trying to drown. He hides the kittens in a barn he thinks is abandoned while he searches for their mother.

To his surprise, the barn is occupied by Alice, a wealthy girl who is hiding her racehorse so it won't be taken. Alice and Lucas bond, and she allows him to keep the kittens in the barn.

Bolstered by his display of courage, Lucas takes on a more dangerous mission for Claire, a new mother he meets in a maternity home where he delivers groceries. There is a plan for her baby to be sent to Germany to be adopted by a Nazi family.

Lucas steals the infant and brings him to a cottage near the stable. But when their hiding place is discovered, he and Alice make a drastic decision for the baby's welfare. This page-turning novel is heartwarming and heartbreaking at the same time. *Ages 10–14*

By the New York Times–bestselling author of Pax
SARA PENNYPACKER
THE LIONS' RUN
"Lucas Dubois is proof that a mere kitten can be the bravest of lions by always standing up for what's right."
—ALAN GRATZ, bestselling author of Refugee

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR YOUR BOOK CLUB

What do you think Lucas' bravest act is?

Would you have joined the French resistance if you were in Lucas' situation?

How does the relationship between Lucas and Alice change over time?

Why do you think Lucas is motivated to help Claire?

Do you think it's ever OK to commit a crime to stop an injustice? Explain.

Which of the plot twists in the book surprised you the most?

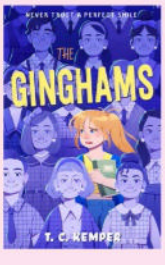
If you have read other novels set during World War II, how did they compare to this one?

Find your next great read

If you liked…

The Midnight Children
By Dan Gemeinhart
A lonely boy befriends a group of children who move into the neighborhood in the middle of the night. When they face danger, he tries to protect them. This book is full of intrigue, with an ending that may surprise you. ***Ages 8–12***

You might like…



The Ginghams
By T. C. Kemper
After spending the summer at a camp, a girl returns home to find out her town has eerily changed and there's a creepy new family in the neighborhood. She works through the mystery of what's behind the sudden shift in the community. ***Ages 8–12***

Guess the book this quote comes from

"Indifference and neglect often do much more damage than outright dislike."

Hint: It comes from a respected leader in the fifth adventure in a best-selling wizarding series, which was adapted for the big screen.

Answer: *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* by J.K. Rowling. Professor Dumbledore imparts these wise words about the dangers of ignoring the mistreatment of others.

THIS WEEK'S AUTHOR

Sara Pennypacker

Best-selling and award-winning author Sara Pennypacker is known for her children's, middle-grade, and adult books that blend emotional stories with humor and adventure. Many of them—such as *Pax*, which follows the relationship between a boy named Peter and his pet fox—examine the bond between children and animals.

What kind of research did you do for *The Lions' Run*?

Because the time period and experiences were real, I decided I had to go to France and walk every step of this story. I spent a month there, including two weeks in Lamorlaye, the town where this story takes place. I got to speak to a woman who would have been exactly Lucas' age during World War II. I think I walked through parts of Lamorlaye that were the same as they were 80 years ago during the war, and I walked the Lions' Run horse-training track, which was amazing.

How would you describe Lucas?

He's very empathetic, but he also buys into the misconception that empathy means softness.

What do you want kids to take away from this book?

Questions. That's really the purpose of any good book: to spark discussion.

What books do you remember most from when you were a child?

I certainly loved books about animals, as well as books about children connecting with animals. Now I love to write about that. *The Yearling* was very moving to me. I loved *Heidi* so much that I would beg my parents to let me sleep in the attic, like she did. They said no! But I also begged them for a goat, like Heidi tended, and they let me keep a pet goat.

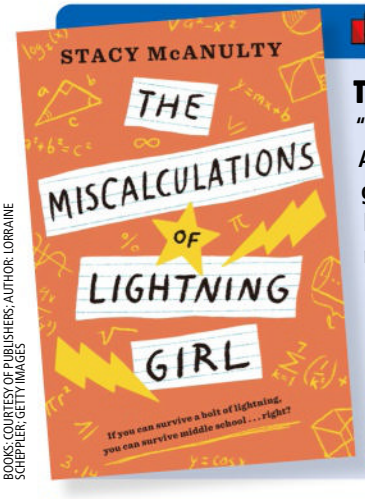
If you could experience any time period, which would it be?

It would be before any screens, even television. I would make a very strong case for life pre-screens in which interactions between humans were, at the very least, over the phone.

Do you have a favorite dessert?

Gosh, yes. You can't go wrong with carrot cake!

Reader recommends


STACY McANULTY
THE MISCALCULATIONS OF LIGHTNING GIRL
If you can survive a bolt of lightning, you can survive middle school . . . right?

The Miscalculations of Lightning Girl *By Stacy McAnulty*

"Lucy Callahan is a 12-year-old who is super good at math. After she gets struck by lightning, she becomes a math genius. Lucy was homeschooled, but her grandma makes her go to public middle school for one year. Lucy has to make a friend, join a school activity, and read a book that's not about math. Lucy faces new challenges and learns that life is about more than numbers. The story teaches lessons about friendship, accepting differences, and trying new things even when they seem scary." Claire, 12, Pennsylvania

Do you have a book to recommend? We want to hear about it! With an adult's help, please send your review to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

BOOKS: COURTESY OF PUBLISHERS; AUTHOR: LORRAINE SCHEPPLER; GETTY IMAGES

Three new series to get started on

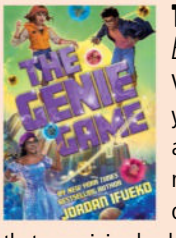
Crack open Book One from these popular authors.

The Cat Prophecies: Claw Quest
By Nik Korpon and Jorge Enrique Paz

Tito, age 13, is sick of being bullied and longs to be a hero. Imagine his surprise when a quippy cat transports him to a land filled with feline guardians that are looking for a Chosen One to help them stop evil spirits that want to do harm. Tito hopes it's his destiny, but his friends may be more likely candidates. This fast-paced fantasy tale is full of fun. *Ages 8–12*

Fatal Glitch: Camp Zero
By Erin Entrada Kelly and Eliot Schrefer, illustrated by Jeannette Arroyo

An 11-year-old gamer who accidentally injured her sister is sent to an isolated wilderness camp, which she finds out is backed by a video game company. She enters an elimination-style contest whose winner will receive a million game credits. She'll stop at nothing to win. *Ages 8–12*



The Genie Game
By Jordan Ifueko

Valentine, an aspiring young director, will do anything to find her missing sister, even taking on the sinister businesses that are ruining her home city of Gloss Angeles. She's forced into a wish-granting competition that may bring her answers but makes the businesses more powerful. Science fiction and mysticism collide in this clever look at how both greed and magic have a price. *Ages 10–14*

Find out more about *The Week Junior* Book Club and check out our previous titles at kids.theweekjunior.com/bookclub.

RECORD RIDER
Mike Stewart of the US has won the most world bodyboarding championships, with a total of nine titles.

Learn to bodyboard

Check out this fun, easy way to ride the ocean's waves this summer.

Bodyboarding—also known as boogie boarding—is a water sport that's great for beginners. Unlike surfing, where you stand and balance on a long board, bodyboarding involves a shorter board you ride on your stomach. "Bodyboarding is a really exciting way for kids to enjoy our ocean playground," says Jennifer Steffener, co-owner of Coastline Adventures Surfing School in Mantoloking, New Jersey. Here's how to get started.

Get the right board

First, find a boogie board that's the right size for your height. Stand one up with the bottom (tail) touching the ground. The top (nose) should be level with your belly button. You'll also need a swim shirt to shield your skin from the board's friction. And be sure to wear sunscreen.

Boogie with a buddy.

Follow safety basics

Only go bodyboarding when there's a lifeguard present at the beach. Go with a trusted adult and a swim buddy. Attach the strap to your arm to keep your board from floating away. Head to the water, carrying the board on your hip to secure it. Pick a landmark, like the lifeguard chair or your family's umbrella, and check that you stay lined up with it.

Read the ocean

Several waves, one right after the other, that are big and powerful are called a set. Between sets there's a quiet period—a lull—where waves are smaller. Enter the water during a lull, walking out to where it's knee-deep. Place your board in the water, lie on your belly, hold the sides (rails), and kick to propel yourself out further. Once you're out far enough, stand up sideways, holding your board in front of you toward shore, while keeping an eye on the waves behind you. When a wave comes and starts to crumble, that's when you'll point the nose of your board toward the beach, lie on the board, and launch yourself onto the wave. Steer the board left or right by leaning on your elbows. As you approach shore, slide to the back of the board and lift up the nose to slow down. As you improve, you can paddle out farther and enjoy even longer rides.

Keep your board in top shape

Avoid piling things on your board and dragging it to your spot on the sand. This can scratch the slick side of the board that helps it glide. At home afterward, rinse your board to remove sand and salt. Store it upright in a dry place, ready for the next time you ride the waves!

The first boogie board

The world's first boogie board was created by a US engineer, surfer, and jazz musician named Tom Morey (shown above, with a current board on the left and his original board on the right).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Morey made surf gear. In the summer of 1971, he was at home in Hawaii when he made a short board by cutting a 9-foot piece of polyethylene packing foam in two. He used an iron to seal it with newspaper.

He named his invention the Morey Boogie, after a type of swing music. He first sold the boards as custom kits, and they later became mass-produced. By 1977, 80,000 boogie boards were being made each year.

WARNING! Ask an adult's permission before using the oven.

DAIRY STATE Wisconsin, which made more than 3.5 billion pounds of cheese in 2024, is the nation's top cheese producer.

Bake up cheddar bacon drop biscuits

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 2 cups finely shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 green onions, white and light green parts finely chopped
- 4 slices cooked, thick-cut bacon, crumbled
- 1½ cups buttermilk

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 400˚F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar in a large bowl. Mix in the cheese, green onion, and bacon.
3. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Pour the buttermilk into the well and use a fork to mix the ingredients until the dough just comes together into a craggy batter. Do not overmix.
4. Drop 12 heaping spoonfuls of the batter on the prepared baking sheet and bake for 20 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Makes 12 biscuits.

ECO TIP OF THE WEEK: BE A FRIEND TO THE BAY

A bay is a small body of water connected to a larger body of water, such as an ocean or a lake. Partially surrounded by land, bays have calmer waters and diverse ecosystems. Bays that open to the ocean have marine habitats, while bays on lakes and rivers are home to freshwater life. However, bays are under threat from pollution and habitat loss. You and your family can help. Together, look online for volunteer opportunities, such as a "clean the bay day" to remove trash from a shoreline. There are also volunteer days to help conservationists transplant clams or oysters to repopulate a bay. These mollusks naturally filter the water, keeping it clean for grasses, fish, and seabirds.

Help keep litter out of the water.

ERICA CLARK FOR STONE KITCHEN CREATIVE; GETTY IMAGES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Crisscross

Each of these things associated with Hawaii fits into this grid. Can you find where each one goes to complete the grid?

3 letters
BAY
LEI

4 letters
HULA
LAVA
LUAU
OAHU

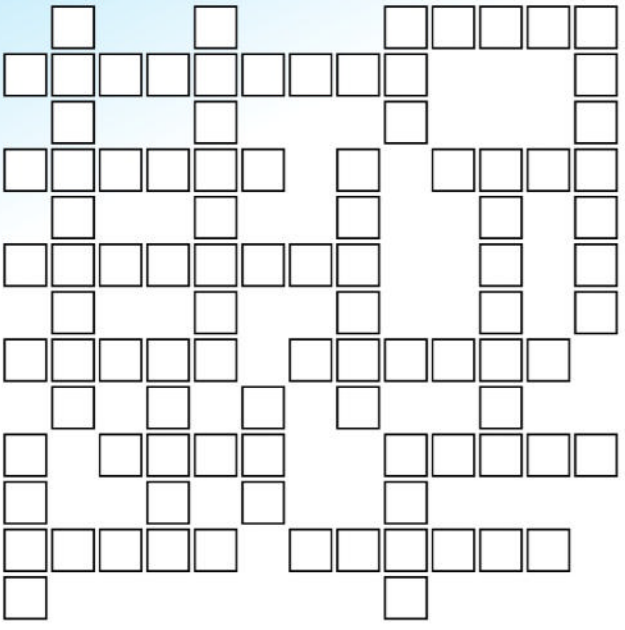
5 letters
ALOHA
BEACH
LANAI
OCEAN
SCUBA

6 letters
HIKING
MAHALO
MUUMUU
SURFER

7 letters
ISLANDS
UKULELE

8 letters
HONOLULU
MAUNA LOA

9 letters
PINEAPPLE
TIKI TORCH



Take five

Five 5-letter words associated with playing cards are hidden in this grid. For each one, the first letter is somewhere in the first column, the second is somewhere in the second column, and so on. Can you find all five? (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)

J	A	M	E	Y
S	U	K	D	N
R	P	E	M	E
Q	O	N	E	S
H	U	A	D	R

ALL THE SAME

Each answer contains the letters P-E-A. Those letters have been placed for you. Can you figure out the words?

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

1. Say or do again — □ □ PEA □
2. Comic strip with Snoopy — PEA □ □ □ □
3. Author of *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* — □ □ □ □ □ □ PEA □ □
4. Bird with a very showy tail — PEA □ □ □ □
5. Person from the continent where France and Spain are located — □ □ □ □ PEA □

SUDOKU

To complete the grid, place the numbers from 1 to 6 exactly once in each row, column, and 2x3 bold-lined box.

1				5	
	2		6		
		5			
			3		
		3		4	
	4				2

Spot the difference

These two pictures of NASA headquarters appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?

PUZZLES BY PUZZABILITY

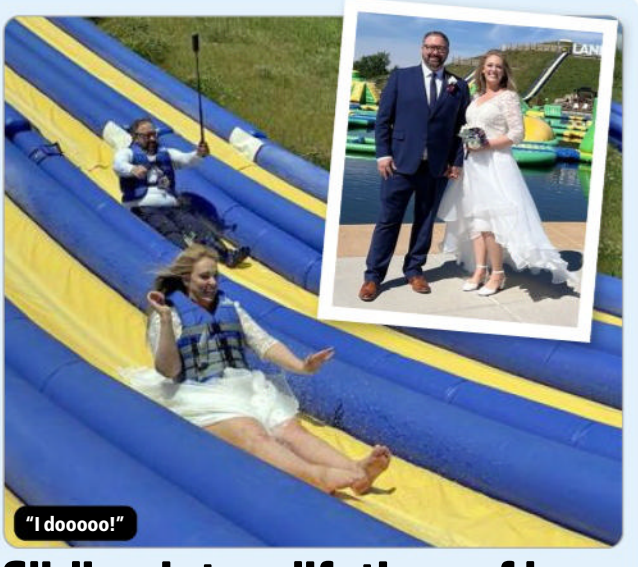
Take five hint: One word begins with HA.

The world's loudest person

The new holder of the Guinness World Records title of loudest person in the world is Joseph McGrail-Bateup. As the town crier of Canberra, Australia, his job is to make public announcements at community events. To take the title, he shouted the word "now" at 122.4 decibels—about the same volume as a jet taking off. The previous record-holder was a teacher who yelled "Quiet!" at 121.7 decibels. McGrail-Bateup said winning the record was "a lot of fun."

Unusual new summer sides

This summer, Bush's Baked Beans launched a limited-edition line inspired by three iconic tastes of the season: dill pickle, apple pie, and rocket pop. The third flavor, with its zing of cherry, lime, and blue raspberry inspired by classic ice pops, was particularly fascinating to baked bean lovers. These special summer flavors quickly sold out after their launch but have earned mixed reactions online. One commenter asked if the new flavors were a joke, and another said they were "too chaotic."



Sliding into a lifetime of love

As a couple from North Dakota attempted to renew their wedding vows as many times as possible in 30 days, one "I do" turned slippery. For their sixth ceremony, Jon and Keisha Lakoduk said their vows at the top of a set of 60-foot-tall waterslides at the Land of Natura Water Park in Wisconsin. Then the duo slid down to the lake below, riding the slide over and over again for an hour so Keisha could break another world record—for trips down a waterslide in a wedding dress. "What an experience," she said.

Robot joins top magic society

A robot has been accepted into the Magic Circle, the world's most famous magic society. "D4RYL," a robot powered by artificial intelligence, performs tricks such as mind-reading and moving objects without touching them. Its owner, magician David Penn, says D4RYL is the star of his show and receives plenty of applause from the audience. D4RYL is now the only non-human member of the Magic Circle apart from Sooty, a bear glove puppet. Is this story real, or is it just a clever trick?*

*Fake! D4RYL was rejected from the Magic Circle. Marvin Berglas, the society's president, said that although the robot can do tricks, it can't replace human magicians who make "the hairs on the back of your neck stand up" with awe.

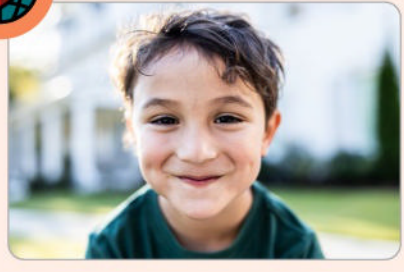
GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS; BUSH'S BEANS; WQOW (2); TERRY HARRIS FOR THE TIMES; ON LEFT PAGE: GETTY IMAGES

Editor's note

Amid all the excitement of the World Cup (p18), the Wimbledon tennis tournament (p19), and a new rowing record (p4), there's more big news this week in sports: The first US professional baseball league for women in 72 years is about to begin its inaugural season (p12). The Women's Professional Baseball League will get underway with four teams, representing Boston, Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco, and the first game will be played on August 1. I hope our article helps you understand more about the history of women in baseball in the US and how significant this new league is. If you're looking for a film tie-in, consider watching *A League of Their Own*, a 1992 movie inspired by the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, which featured more than 600 women playing in games from 1943 to 1954. I wish the new league a successful first season and many more to come.

Andrea Barbalich
Editorial Director

CHARITY OF THE WEEK



The Children's House

The organization, founded in 1990, provides support to children and families in Pennsylvania who are affected by neglect or abuse. It offers a safe place where families can access resources, such as medical care, in a child-friendly environment. The group works with communities to ensure that families feel supported and are treated with kindness and respect. Find out more at chcac.org.

CHCAC
THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE
CHILD ADVOCACY CENTER

Helping to reduce screen time

Aryn, 11, California

"For my school project called TCAP (Think Care Act Project), I chose to address screen use in adolescents because it is an issue that so many young people face. I made a newsletter, a comic, and a presentation to alert my peers and parents about how screen overuse can negatively affect kids. I also donated books to a group that provides reading materials to kids from disadvantaged areas to give them alternatives to screens. I hope my actions will help reduce screen time for children and adolescents for their better future!"

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

RIDDLE OF THE WEEK
What eight-letter word contains a single letter?
Envelope

Enter *The Week Junior*'s Nature Photo Contest

Do you love taking photographs of plants, flowers, trees, and wildlife? Now is your chance to use your creativity, curiosity, and skills to enter *The Week Junior*'s Nature Photo Contest. The entry form for 8- to 10-year-olds is available at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-2026PhotoContest-8-10 and 11- to 14-year-olds is at tinyurl.com/TWJUS-2026PhotoContest-11-14. Winning entries will be featured in a September 2026 issue of the magazine. See the official rules at theweekjunior.com/photocontestrules.

THE WEEK Junior IT'S YOUR TURN Email your news, views, and photos to *hello@theweekjunior.com.*

Your turn

YOUR PHOTOS

We'd love to see pictures you've taken or pictures with you in them! Have an adult email them to us at *hello@theweekjunior.com*, along with anything you would like us to know about what's happening in the photo.

"I am a bookworm, and I especially love *The Week Junior*!" Milo, 7, Washington

"I showed my teacher that she was the Teacher of the Week in *The Week Junior*. She was so surprised and excited!" Remi, 8, Texas

"Our family loved the chai oatmeal cookies!" Leo, 12, and Daphne, 10, California

Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mrs. Carrie Stammer**

School: **Chilton Area Catholic School**

"Mrs. Stammer is a great teacher because she gives us multiple ways to learn something. She has a great attitude. Mrs. Stammer is always ready for whatever comes her way, and she always shows up to school with a smile on her face. One of the things she does every year is Wisconsin Pioneer Day! We dress up in costumes and have a school day as pioneers. That is why Mrs. Stammer is such an amazing teacher."

Nina, 10, Wisconsin

Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!
Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to *hello@theweekjunior.com*.

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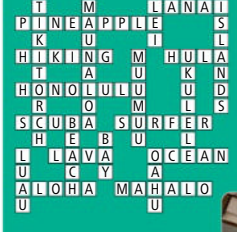
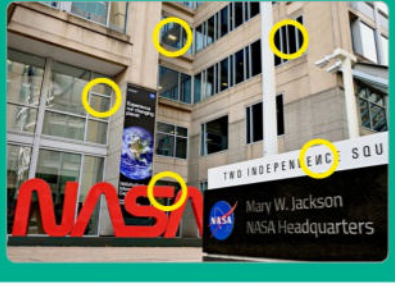
Puzzle answers (from page 26)



Take five
joker
spade
rummy
queen
hands

All the same
1. repeat
2. *Peanuts*
3. Shakespeare
4. peacock
5. European

1	3	6	2	5	4
5	2	4	6	1	3
3	6	5	4	2	1
4	1	2	3	6	5
2	5	3	1	4	6
6	4	1	5	3	2



Quiz answers (from page 30)
1 b) Kittens **2** a) Boston **3** True **4** Five **5** a) Crayons **6** False. It could not fly. **7** b) Kelsie Whitmore **8** North Dakota **9** c) William the Conqueror **10** False. It flew into Oregon. **11** Horsehead nebula **12** c) 15,000 **13** Yuan Wonton **14** True **15** c) Ice pops

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.

How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 In the book *The Lions' Run*, what kind of animals does Lucas rescue?
a) Bunnies b) Kittens c) Puppies
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

2 The first Disability Pride Day was held in which US city?
a) Boston b) Atlanta c) San Francisco
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

3 True or false? A study found that getting food from humans affected bottlenose dolphins' social groups.
True ☐ False ☐

4 How many tennis Grand Slam titles has Jannik Sinner won?

5 In a popular video on the new *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* YouTube channel, which objects are being made?
a) Crayons b) Markers c) Pencils
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

6 True or false? The newly identified dinosaur species Jian changmaensis could fly.
True ☐ False ☐

7 Which player was selected as the first pick in the Women's Professional Baseball League draft?
a) Ayami Sato b) Kelsie Whitmore
c) Mo'ne Davis
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

8 The new Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library opened in what US state?

3

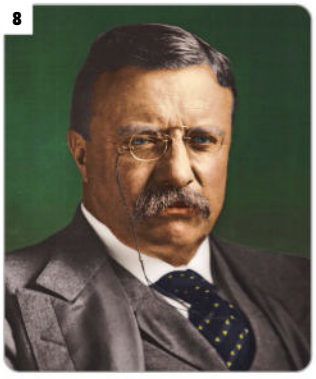
14

9

ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

10

8



9 The Bayeux Tapestry depicts which of these historical figures?
a) Henry V
b) Charlemagne
c) William the Conqueror
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

10 True or false? A California condor was recently recorded flying into Nevada for the first time in more than 100 years.
True ☐ False ☐

11 Astrophotographer Greg Meyer recently captured a new image of what famous nebula?

12 The National Geographic Museum of Exploration represents the work of how many explorers?
a) 150
b) 1,500
c) 15,000
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

13 What is the name of chef Penelope Wong's restaurant?

14 True or false? All four teams that made it into the 2026 World Cup semifinals were previous champions of the tournament.
True ☐ False ☐

15 Bush's Baked Beans released a summer flavor inspired by which frozen treats?
a) Sundaes b) Snow cones
c) Ice pops
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

THE WEEK Junior

Editorial director: Andrea Barbalich
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